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February 2, 1983

Mr. David Fanning, Executive Producer
FRONTLINE
WGBH-TV
125 Western Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02134

Dear David:

While you're moving about your many "fronts" up there, I thought I should keep you informed from one of the "trenches" down here. I'm also moved to write by receipt of the "Janovsky Papers", which I cover in a separate memorandum (also enclosed). All our best.

Sincerely,

Irv Drasnin

MEMORANDUM #1
"Looking for Mao"
2/2/83

As of 2/2/83, we have cut assemblies of most of the sequences and interviews considered as possibilities for "Looking for Mao".

The interviews in Chinese have been translated but probably are still in need of some refinement. We have a tentative line-up for organizing the film which, naturally, is subject to revision. We plan to look at a very long assembly within the next week -- in preparation for a rough-cut and scripting.

At this point, there is at least one piece of archival material under serious consideration -- that of Mao Zedong at the Ninth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (a Chinese government film, 1969), a meeting that exalted Mao and his policies of the cultural revolution. So far, the film has been difficult to track down because of its discredited politics but we expect to find a print somewhere (I used parts of the film in my CBS News documentary "Misunderstanding China" but we need a clean, unmixed sound track even if we were to use the same pictures). While additional footage from this era (including my "Shanghai" film of 1973-74 for CBS) could indeed be useful, we also have a very full "hour" as it is. For now, therefore, we're holding off on other stock footage possibilities.

While we're making every effort to "deliver" by March 18, a back-timing of the least "accident-prone" post-production schedule makes March 25 seem a more realistic date. In any case, we're moving ahead as fast as possible and we'll keep you advised.

Best regards,

Irv Drasnin

TO: David Fanning
FROM: Irv Drasnin
DATE: February 2, 1983

1.

As for the "Janovsky Papers", which I have now received and -- with David Liu -- perused, I offer the following questions and comments.

(1) Mr. Janovsky states that he paid the China Film Co. $10,000 for the military film, which on paper involved considerably more travel and logistics than the film subsequently made and for which (to my knowledge) little or no preparation had been made and which, in any case, was not filmed. What happened to that $10,000, and what did it cover?

(2) If there had been a military film, I doubt that -- as Mr. Janovsky indicates -- there would have been "no accompanying persons". It's reasonable to assume there would have been, with relevant costs.

(3) What did the additional $7000 payment cover, exactly -- since it doesn't appear to have covered any of the expenses cited in the accounting. (When Mr. Janovsky said he needed more money in Peking -- the $7000 agreed upon -- he cited location fees and "other expenses" without being more specific -- except for Chinese military stock footage, which we declined.) The location fees of $1239.60 are documented and, in our view, an acceptable expense given the current Chinese policies on filming in China.

(4) The considerable expenses for "extras and local unit workers" are not clearly defined or supported. There appear to be inconsistencies and even some duplication regarding the number of "local workers" at each location and their expenses. The example used is Shanghai, possibly the most expensive of the cities we visited. There are seven rooms listed, yet two of them are for Chinese from Peking traveling with us -- not "local workers" -- who, it is our recollection, shared one room. Neither do we understand the discrepancies in room costs at the Peace Hotel in Shanghai or the citation for a "Bohemia Film-China Film Buro (sic!)" room. Also, we are not aware of any rooms (we had) in China costing as much as $50 (that's the price for a room at the Jianguo Hotel in Peking, the most expensive in town, where we did not stay). Generally, as far as we know, Chinese shared rooms throughout the trip (as did the camera crew in most places). (In Peking, the China Film Co. did keep one room at

the Peking Hotel.)

It's implied in this section of the accounting that we were aware of all this ("...but Mr. Drasnin and Mr. Liu know all about this procedures (sic!)." That is not the case. We were neither consulted nor privy to any financial arrangements or costs agreed to in China by Mr. Janovsky except for some of the location fees -- including the Y1520 ($750) cost of filming the conductor rehearsing the Shanghai orchestra. At no time, beyond the additional $7000 already mentioned, were either David or myself aware of additional costs involved in the making of this film -- before, during or after the China trip. Mr. Janovsky would make it appear we were a party to these additional costs when, in fact, we were not.

(5) Mr. Janovsky refers to the late arrival of filmstock and audio tape and "a last-minute decision" to film in Peking the night of 12/9/83 as cause for additional shipping costs.

It was our understanding that Bohemia was to supply the filmstock and audio tape. We did not learn until shortly before departure (from New York) that it was to be obtained and shipped from the U.S. to Munich -- but, the inconvenience aside, that's a relatively small amount. (It also was our understanding that Bohemia was to supply all necessary equipment, including a 12-240 zoom lens which, at considerably more cost, we had to obtain, hand-carry and presumably pay for -- I don't see it reflected in the accounting.)

There was no "last-minute decision" to film the night before Mr. Janovsky and the crew departed Peking on Friday, December 10. We had agreed to and planned a full week's shooting -- and Thursday night (12/9/82) was the date and time specified by the Chinese for filming the play, a sequence everyone (except maybe the Chinese) agreed was important to the film. The Chinese had informed us earlier in the week of this schedule. Mr. Janovsky could either have sought to make arrangements in advance for shipping the equipment at cargo rates on the 10th or shipped at that rate on a subsequent flight. I'm not aware of his doing either.

(It should also be mentioned that the camera crew apparently had informed Mr. Janovsky before leaving Germany that they had to leave China by December 3 -- a full week, as it turned out, before we were finished shooting, in accordance with an agreed upon thirty-day shooting schedule. We were not informed of this and knew nothing about it until Mr. Janovsky attempted to curtail the number of shooting days and locations, without apparent regard for the outcome of the film. Please see my earlier letter to Bob Glover regarding payment to two members of the camera crew -- Messrs. Luther and Arpa -- for the last week's shooting, another expense not accounted for in Mr. Janovsky's report.)

(6) In his cover letter, Mr. Janovsky refers to "two films". Despite the fact that at a meeting in New York before leaving for China it was explicitly made clear that only <u>one</u> film was to be made; despite my continued insistence while in China that only <u>one</u> film was being made; despite my unequivocal re-affirmation of this position during his recent visit to New York, Mr. Janovsky clings to this proposition as if it were an agreed possibility. Apparently -- and without my knowledge -- he made similar representations to the camera crew while in China since at one point the cameraman came to me confused and distressed about shooting "two films" at once. I didn't know what he was talking about then. I don't know what Mr. Janovsky is talking about now. As agreed -- before, during and since the filming -- we are making one film.

(7) Mr. Janovsky has included an agreement he signed with the China Film Co. on 11/23/83 in Peking (while I was in Chongqing with the camera crew) and which I have now seen for the first time. There are two points. In that agreement, it's stated that China Film Co. (Party A) will supply one organizer and one interpreter to travel with the film crew -- and one or two guides in each city visited. How did the number reach five or six ("local persons") as indicated by the Bohemia accounting of additional costs? (It is possible I've missed something -- the accounting is not easy to follow.)

But that isn't what's onerous, indefensible

and unacceptable about the agreement. Point 7 cites Bohemia's agreement that the "narration of the film will be sent to Party A (China Film Co.) for suggestions before March of 1983 ... " At great length, in exhausting detail and most emphatically -- without any possibility for misinterpretation and, at times, in the presence of the camera crew, which shared our position -- we rejected without compromise any such or similar provision. Both personally and in behalf of WGBH, it was made clear to Mr. Janovsky that we could not, would not be a party to any such agreement and that if it were a pre-condition for filming, we would immediately end our association with the project. Mr. Janovsky had absolutely no right to make such an agreement as long as WGBH was involved in the production -- nor has he any right, as I suspect he might, to explain the non-appearance of a script in advance of broadcast as the "fault of the Americans." Both David Liu and I used our friends and contacts in China -- their advice, help and good offices -- in pursuit of making this film and each of us has the right to expect to make more films in China without damage to our reputations that might be caused by Mr. Janovsky's making an agreement we cannot fulfill. In fact, neither of us have ever had to reach such an agreement in the past. It's my intention to make this clear again to Mr. Janovsky -- in writing -- a letter I believe should be co-signed by WGBH. If necessary, I'm also prepared to make it clear to the China Film Co.

Similarly, Bohemia simply had no right to make financial committments beyond its means on this production without prior consultation with WGBH or its representatives. Finally, it seems to me that WGBH has every right to expect that Bavarian Television share equitably in these production costs.

Sincerely,

Irv Drasnin